IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) In an information distribution system including provider equipment and subscriber equipment, said provider equipment communicating to said subscriber equipment information streams including content requested by said subscriber equipment, ~~an apparatus~~ the provider equipment comprising:

a session manager, coupled through a communication network to said subscriber equipment, for interacting with said subscriber equipment and maintaining a plurality of playlists created by ~~the subscriber~~ subscribers in the information distribution system coupled to the provider equipment, wherein each playlist is associated with a respective subscriber and is created and controlled at said session manager by said subscriber using commands provided to the subscriber equipment by said subscriber, said subscriber equipment being in communication with said session manager to provide said commands to said session manager, said playlist defining a plurality of content streams to be provided to ~~said~~ subscriber equipment of the subscriber associated with the playlist and identifying a location of content streams defined in the playlist and a location of auxiliary streams associated therewith, said ~~playlist further identifying~~ auxiliary streams further including reverse and fast-forward streams associated with each one of said plurality of content streams defined in said playlist created by said subscriber, each content stream comprising a plurality of splicing entry and exit points dispersed therein to enable transitioning between said plurality of content streams, wherein said splicing entry and exit points are identified within transport packet headers of each one of said plurality of content streams;

a server, coupled to the session manager, for storing said plurality of content streams at locations identified in the playlists, wherein said plurality of content streams are configured to facilitate inter-asset transition to provide seamless splicing; and

a server controller, coupled to the server and session manager, for retrieving from said server, content streams defined by said playlist, said content streams being sequentially provided to said subscriber equipment according to said playlist created by said subscriber and in response to commands from said subscriber to play content streams associated with said playlist;

wherein a copy of said playlist is remotely coupled within said information distribution system to the session manager;

said server controller, in response to determining that a remaining portion of a current content stream provided to said subscriber equipment is below a threshold, communicating a termination notification to said session manager;

said session manager, in response to receiving said termination notification, communicating a request to said server controller identifying from said playlist a next content stream to be provided to said subscriber equipment from the server;

said session manager further maintaining said playlist after content streams defined by said playlist have been provided to said subscriber equipment and modifying said playlist and said copy of playlist in response to playlist modification commands received from said subscriber equipment in response to input from the subscriber, wherein a next content stream in said playlist is spliced at an entry point associated with an exit point of a current content stream being provided to said subscriber equipment.

9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein:

said modification commands comprise at least one of an add command, a delete command, a skip forward command, a skip backwards command, a fast forward command and a rewind command.

10. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

said session manager, in response to said add command and said delete command, respectively adding or deleting a subscriber-indicated content stream from said playlist.

11. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

said session manager, in response to said skip forward command and said skip backwards command, causing said server controller to begin providing to said subscriber equipment, respectively, a next content stream or a previous content stream within said playlist.

12. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

said session manager, in response to said fast forward command and said rewind command, causing said server controller to begin providing to said subscriber equipment, respectively, said fast forward stream or said fast rewind stream associated with a presently provided content stream.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said server comprises a plurality of servers, each of said plurality of servers storing at least a respective portion of the content streams available to a subscriber, said server controller causing a transport processor to receive a substantially continuous stream of content for each active subscriber regardless of the server presently storing that content.

16. (Currently Amended) In an information distribution system including provider equipment of a provider and subscriber equipment, said provider equipment communicating content to said subscriber equipment via a distribution network, a provider method comprising the steps of:

establishing a session ~~with~~ between a session manager included in said provider equipment and said subscriber equipment of a subscriber, said subscriber equipment being coupled to the session manager via a communications network of said provider;

maintaining, at said session manager, a plurality of playlists created by ~~the subscriber~~ subscribers in the information distribution system coupled to the provider equipment, wherein each one of said plurality of playlists is associated with a respective subscriber and is created and controlled at said session manager by said subscriber using commands provided to the subscriber equipment by said subscriber, said subscriber equipment being in communication with said session manager to provide said commands to said session manager;

said playlist identifying, at a server, a location of content streams defined in the playlist and a location of auxiliary streams associated therewith and determining, at a server controller coupled to said server and session manager, a sequence of content streams according to said playlist created by said subscriber to be retrieved from said locations at [[a]] said server in response to commands from said subscriber to play content streams associated with said playlist, said server being coupled to the session manager and ~~coupled~~ to a transport processor for distribution to said subscriber via said ~~distribution~~ communications network of said provider,

each content stream configured to facilitate inter-asset transition to provide seamless splicing and comprising a plurality of splicing entry and exit points dispersed therein to enable transitioning between content streams, wherein said splicing entry and exit points are identified within transport packet headers of each one of said content streams, said ~~playlist further identifying~~ auxiliary streams further including reverse and fast-forward streams associated with said content streams defined in said playlist created by said subscriber;

maintaining a copy of said playlist remotely coupled within said information distribution system to the session manager;

transmitting [[by]] to the session manager from ~~the subscriber~~ said subscriber equipment a playlist modification command in response to input from the subscriber, said playlist being modified at said ~~provider equipment~~ session manager in response to transmission of said playlist modification command;

transmitting [[by]] to the session manager from ~~the subscriber~~ said subscriber equipment a content stream modification command in response to input from the subscriber, said content stream being modified in response to transmission of said content stream modification command;

determining a next content stream to be provided to said subscriber equipment from said playlist created by the subscriber, wherein determining said next content stream comprises:

communicating a termination notification from [[a]] said server controller to a session manager in response to determining that a remaining portion of a current content stream provided to said subscriber equipment is below a threshold; and

in response to transmission of said termination notification, communicating a request from said session manager to said server controller identifying from said playlist of a next content stream to be provided to said subscriber equipment;

closing a present content stream being retrieved from [[a]] said server and provided to said transport processor;

causing said next content stream to be provided to said transport processor upon the termination of the present content stream provided to said transport processor, wherein said next content stream in said playlist is spliced at an entry point associated with an exit point of said current content stream being provided to said subscriber equipment; and

maintaining said playlist and said copy of playlist at said session manager for later recall and use by the subscriber after content streams defined by said playlist and said copy of playlist have been provided to said subscriber equipment.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein:

said modification commands provided by the subscriber comprise at least one of an add command, a delete command, a skip forward command, a skip backwards command, a fast forward command and a rewind command.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of:

adding or deleting a subscriber-indicated content stream from said play list in response to, respectively, said add command and said delete command.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

in response to said fast forward command and said rewind command, causing said server controller to begin providing to said subscriber equipment, respectively, said fast forward stream or said fast rewind stream associated with a presently provided content stream

20-21. (Canceled)